

# **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Where to Find Help**

## **If you are a grandparent raising grandchildren, you are not alone:**

- 6.3% of US children under 18 (4.5 million) live in grandparent-headed households (Census 2000)
- About one-third of these children have no parent present in the grandparent-headed household
- There are grandparent-headed households in every socioeconomic and ethnic group

## **What You Should Know**

Where can I get help about legal issues?

Grandparent caregivers often face legal issues such as custody, adoption, guardianship, and foster care. Many times agreements can be reached through mediation. For help in learning about the best choice for your family, contact:

- Mediation services
- Local/state bar associations
- Legal services/legal aid society
- A lawyer who specializes in family law
- Local department of social services
- Foster care or adoption agencies
- Family service agencies

There isn't enough money to go around. How can I get financial assistance?

It is often difficult to afford to house, feed, and clothe your grandchild. Some states offer subsidies for grandparent caregivers. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), a federal/state program, is also an option. To find out about these and other options in your community, contact the following organizations:

- The local Social Security Administration office for information about Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Grandparent support groups (contact the AARP Grandparent Information Center to see if a group exists near you)

- Local department of social services, aging, or family services
- Religious/charitable groups

The bottom line:

You are **not alone**. There is help for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren.

How can I get health care/insurance for my grandchildren?

Various options include private insurance, Medicaid, or state Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP). You can determine what your grandchild is eligible for by contacting:

- Your own insurance carrier to see if your grandchild qualifies as a dependent on your policy
- Your local department of social services or child and family services office for Medicaid/CHIP information
- Local/state public health office for low-cost or free programs

Where can I find quality child care for my grandchild?

To find a care provider for your grandchild, get information from:

- Child care resource and referral agencies
- Your employer's human resources department
- Religious groups that sponsor programs
- Local/state social service agency and child care licensing board
- Local school system
- Local Headstart program or childcare center

How can I enroll my grandchild in school?

It is important to keep your grandchild in school. You will need to find out if you need legal custody or guardianship to enroll your grandchild. If your grandchild has behavioral or learning challenges, ask about special services that may be offered. Contact:

- Principal or guidance counselor at your local school
- School board for special education services
- Office for developmental disabilities

- Mental health association for counseling or peer support groups
- Local learning centers for tutoring

Our family is dealing with psychological/emotional issues. Where can I find help?

Both grandparent caregivers and grandchildren often deal with various mental health issues such as grief, anger, confusion, resentment and depression. For support and services, contact:

- Local mental health board or association
- School guidance counselor
- Local clergy
- Private therapist/social worker
- Local social service or child and family services agency
- Doctor
- Grandparent support group (contact AARP's GIC to see if a group exists near you)
- Community college, school system, YM/YWCA for parenting classes

Where is the best place to look for contacts?

- Look in your phone book - government agencies and offices are usually listed in a separate section, sometimes called the "blue pages"
- Call your local library and ask about locating the services or offices you need
- Search on the Internet

**Check to see if your state has special regulations** for home improvement contractors. Some states provide arbitration or special funds to compensate consumers for unpaid judgments against home improvement contractors.

## For More Information

### [AARP Grandparent Information Center \(GIC\)](#)

Center (GIC) provides information about services and programs that can help improve the lives of The AARP Grandparent Information grandparent-headed households. The GIC also

offers Spanish-language publications. Grandparents can search the National Database of Grandparent Support Groups at [www.aarp.org/grandparents/searchsupport](http://www.aarp.org/grandparents/searchsupport). Write AARP Grandparent Information Center, 601 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20049; phone: 1-800-434-3410; email: [member@aarp.org](mailto:member@aarp.org).

URL: [www.aarp.org/grandparents/](http://www.aarp.org/grandparents/)

### **Generations United**

Generations United is a national organization that focuses solely on promoting intergenerational strategies, programs, and policies. This site has several fact sheets about grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren.

URL: [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org)

### **Grand Parent Again**

Grand Parent Again is a Web site that offers information about education, legal support, support groups, and other organizations for grandparents raising grandchildren.

URL: [www.grandparentagain.com](http://www.grandparentagain.com)

### **GrandsPlace**

GrandsPlace is a Web site that is dedicated to supporting grandparents and other relatives raising others' children. It is open to members and non-members of GrandsPlace, and provides opportunities for grandparents to provide comments and to gather information.

URL: [www.grandsplace.com](http://www.grandsplace.com)

### **National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies**

NACCRRRA is the national network of community-based child care resource and referral agencies. It is a common ground where families, child care providers, and communities can share information about quality child care.

URL: [www.naccrra.net](http://www.naccrra.net)

### **National Council on Aging BenefitsCheckUp**

A free service to help older Americans and their families identify state and federal assistance programs. The service is confidential, and takes only a few minutes to complete.

URL: [www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org)

### **The American Bar Association (ABA)**

The ABA provides information about how to find legal assistance, even if you can't afford a lawyer. Information about the judicial system is available as well.

URL: [www.abanet.org/home.html](http://www.abanet.org/home.html)

### **The Children's Defense Fund (CDF)**

CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and provides information about children's issues such as health insurance, child care, and school age care.

URL: [www.childrensdefensefund.org](http://www.childrensdefensefund.org)

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